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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 868
By Graves

A RESOLUTION encouraging the Department of Human Services and the Child Care Facilities Corporation to study the development of a Tennessee Community and Corporate Partnership for Child Care program.

WHEREAS, the General Assembly finds that when private employers provide onsite child care or provide other child care benefits, they benefit by improved recruitment and higher retention rates for employees, lower absenteeism, and improved employee morale; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly also finds that there are many ways in which private employers can provide child care assistance to employees: information and referral, vouchers, employer contribution to child care programs, and onsite care; and employers can offer child care as part of a menu of employee benefits; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly recognizes that flexible compensation programs providing a child care option are beneficial to the private employer through increased productivity, to the private employee in knowing that his or her children are being cared for in a

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safe and nurturing environment, and to the state through increasing private investments in child care; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly recognizes and commends the efforts of United Way Success By Six initiatives across Tennessee to make quality child care available to working parents, especially working parents with incomes below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature created the Child Care Executive Partnership program in 1996 that resulted in business and community investments matching state investments on a dollar for dollar basis, and the Child Care Executive Partnership raised \$10 million to allow more than 8,000 children from low-income families to have received child care assistance who would not otherwise have received care; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Assembly requires public-private partnerships to raise \$1 for every \$10 received in state funding for Smart Start; Smart Start raised \$13 million in cash and in-kind contributions in 1999 and these public-private partnerships provide 58,000 children in 43 countries with high-quality early childhood opportunities; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the Tennessee General Assembly to promote public/private partnerships to ensure that the children of the state be provided safe and enriching child care at any time, but especially while parents work to remain self-sufficient; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the General Assembly that private employers be encouraged to participate in the future of this state by providing employee child care benefits; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the General Assembly to encourage private employers to explore innovative ways to assist employees to obtain quality child care; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That the Department of Human Services is hereby encouraged to work with the Tennessee Child Care Facilities Corporation, established pursuant to title 4, chapter 37, part 1,

to explore the feasibility of establishing a Tennessee Community and Corporate Partnership for Child Care program, similar to that operated in other states, that will utilize available state and federal funds as incentives for matching local funds derived from local governments, employers, charitable institutions or foundations and other sources, so that communities may create local flexible partnerships with employers for the creation and enhancement of child care.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Department of Human Services and the Tennessee Child Care Facilities Corporation be encouraged to explore the development of procedures establishing a child care purchasing pool or, if deemed necessary any number of pools for each county or region, to provide subsidies for low income working parents who are eligible for subsidized child care with a dollar for dollar match from employers, local government, and other matching contributors; or expand facilities or to create, expand or enrich child care programs operated by or utilized by employers; or to develop any other child care options which can be expected to assist in the availability or enhancement of quality child care.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Department of Human Services is encouraged to convene a working group that includes the Tennessee Child Care Facilities Corporation, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, as well as representatives from the business and child care industries to make recommendations to the Department by November 1, 2000 regarding the use of such funds to meet the needs of working parents; to create, expand or upgrade on-site child care facilities; to contract or partner with child care agencies that provide such types of child care as sick-child care, after hours child care for children and any other forms of child care which become necessary to meet the needs of children, parents, and employers; and to use such funds as incentives or for studies which may be necessary to aid in the development of child care for the particular community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Department of Human Services, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations is encouraged to develop a plan for using existing federal, state, or local government

revenues to support the Tennessee Community and Corporate Partnership for Child Care. This plan shall be presented to the Governor and the Speakers of the House and Senate by December 1, 2000.